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Blue Grass stockyards in Stanford opens Thursday

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Blue Grass South Livestock Market has an arena that will seat 300 people, not counting the buyers' booths that will seat at least 20. The business opens Thursday on U.S. 150 just east of Stanford. (Stephanie Schell photo)



Entrance to the Blue Grass South Livestock Market. Regular sale days will be Monday and Thursday, but the facility will be open 24 hours a day, seven days a week. (Stephanie Schell photo)

STANFORD - Eddie Horn said facilities like the new Blue Grass South Livestock Market have been 150 years in the making. On Thursday, those plans come to life as the facility opens for its first public sale.

Horn, who is from Mercer County and a farmer in Burgin, is manager of the new stockyards and one of 12 owners of six stockyards in the state.

"It is something else," Horn said of the 250,000 square-foot facility. "I'm proud to be a part of it."

The facility features eight back-end unloading bays, a double drive-thru, two unloading bases for straight or tractor-trailers, a filter that recycles air in the sale ring area every 45 minutes, and enough space to hold at least 4,500 head of livestock. He said the new stockyards will have such buying power the "business won't quit."

The business will hire 36 people with potential to have as many as 50. Regular sale days will be every Monday and Thursday. Someone will be on site 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

The new stockyards has a restaurant that will be open Monday through Saturday from 7 a.m. to 2 p.m., but will remain open on sale days as long as needed.

"I just love the farmers, and I love the business"

The preparation up to this point has been nothing short of "high pressure" and "nerve wracking" for everyone involved, Horn said. But it's worth it.

"I just love the farmers, and I love the business," he said. "I feel like we can offer something nobody else can."

Horn said speed, price and location will be appealing aspects compared to other stockyards in the area. He is certain they will pull business from every

surrounding county, and even some from Tennessee. He said being in Stanford already has proven to be a good choice.

"This whole community has rolled out the red carpet for us," he said.

He said rumors have circulated that the new stockyards will only benefit the big-time farmer.

"That's bull," Horn said. "We want the little man as much as we want the big man. ... We can absolutely make the farmer money."

Garrard County Stockyards the end of an era

Horn said he understands that when Blue Grass Stockyards bought out Garrard County Stockyards, that was the end of an era. But the new Stanford stockyards is state-of-art.

He tapped on a desk with his knuckle saying that was pretty much the only wood in the facility. The sale ring arena seats 300 people, not counting the 10 buyers' booths, which seat at least 20 people.

An additional 80 acres is located behind the facility, and about 14 acres are across from it on U.S. 150.

"We would like to have an agricultural complex here some day," Horn said.

With a few final details still to complete, Horn said there's no doubt everything will be ready for Thursday's first sale.

"I'm very excited," said Jim Akers, chief operations officer with the new stockyards. "I'm excited to see it work, and I'm excited to be a part of the business community and the agriculture community."

The facility will start taking cattle Wednesday with sales starting at 8:30 a.m. Thursday.

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